

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Bestwork Industries for the Blind INC

New Jersey Manufacturing Extension Program

Improved Productivity and Reduced Stress at Bestwork Industries for the Blind

Client Profile:

Bestwork Industries for the Blind, Inc., established in 1981, is a nonprofit contract assembler for government programs under the umbrella of the National Industries for the Blind. Located in Runnemede, New Jersey the company employs 50 visually impaired people who sew various products, including uniforms, mostly utilized by the military.

Situation:

The New Jersey Manufacturing Extension Program (NJMEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, began working with Bestwork Industries for the Blind in 2005, providing expertise in plant layout and work flow to help them deliver U.S. Army uniforms on time. Recognizing the success at the initial projects, Bestwork expanded the project with NJMEP in order to reduce lead time, improve quality, and lower overall costs.

Solution:

NJMEP and Bestwork assemblers worked together to analyze current processes and implement and develop an improvement plan that focused on reducing time, improving quality and lowering overall costs. The implementation of Lean was guided by a Value Stream Map (VSM) highlighting various areas of waste. Kaizen projects such as 5S and cellular/work flow were also initiated. The project resulted in improved productivity and morale.

Results:

- * Increased sales by \$816,000.
- * Retained sales of \$3 million.
- * Realized \$432,000 in cost savings.
- * Added 5 new jobs.
- * Retained 30 jobs.

Testimonial:

"Due to the productivity improvements, overall morale was greatly improved. The New Jersey Manufacturing Extension Program solved problems that were causing stress throughout the organization. Other talented, skilled and dedicated people could not solve these problems, but NJMEP did!"

Chuck Kingsland, Vice President